United Nations A/50/PV.31

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Monday, 16 October 1995, 10.30 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral ..... (Portugal)

The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

Agenda item 120 *(continued)*

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/50/444/Add.4)

The President: In a letter contained in document A/50/444/Add.4, the Secretary-General informs me that, since the issuance of his communications dated 19 and 22 September and 2 and 4 October 1995, the Gambia has made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of this information?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 157

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation

Draft resolution A/50/L.4

The President: I call on the representative of France to introduce draft resolution A/50/L.4.

Mr. Dejammet (France) (*interpretation from French*): I am honoured, as Chairman of the francophone Group at the United Nations, to introduce draft resolution A/50/L.4. The draft resolution, which is particularly dear to the hearts of all the members of the francophone family, relates to cooperation between the United Nations and the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation.

The Agency is the cornerstone of the institutional edifice of the francophone movement. It is composed of 44 countries from the five continents, representing 400 million human beings, in Europe, sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, the Pacific, the Americas, the Caribbean, the Indian Ocean, the Maghreb and the Near East, that share, to varying degrees, use of the French language.

But, above and beyond the use of the French language, the francophone peoples share a common culture, marked by the diversity of their roots, but always based on the principles of tolerance and respect for the individual.

More than a regional organization or a community of interests, the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation, therefore, shares one basic feature with the United Nations: affirmation of unity and common membership, with respect for plurality. The Agency represents, in effect, a group of countries that draw on their will to act together with respect for others and their attachment to the values of dialogue, complementarity and solidarity. That was how the founding fathers of the francophone movement — the eminent Heads of State, Presidents Léopold Sédar Senghor of Senegal, Hamani Diori of Niger and Habib Bourguiba of Tunisia — saw in the 1970s the future of the francophone community. And

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it is in this spirit that this community strives today, alongside the United Nations and other organizations, to make its contribution to world peace and development.

Allow me briefly to remind the Assembly of the nature of the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation. A unique, intergovernmental institution for francophone countries, it was founded in Niamey in 1970, charged with laying the foundation for cooperation and solidarity between all francophone countries. In addition to being the major actor in multilateral francophone cooperation, the Agency has also, since the Chaillot Summit in 1991, taken on the role of secretariat for all the francophone movement's institutions. Employing today more than 2,500 people, the Agency has a budget of approximately $100 million. It has an office at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

The Agency has many recent achievements to its credit; I shall mention just a few. In the cultural area, the Agency has provided outstanding support to the intellectual output of countries of the South. Through the television channel TV5 Afrique, the Agency has contributed to the development of francophone television on a world scale. Through its fund to support audiovisual productions by countries of the South, the Agency significantly assists the creative talents of that part of the world.

The Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation has also had many successes in technical cooperation, responding to the expectations of the countries of the South. In particular, the Agency has developed a vast network of service centres for the circulation of technical and professional information. Likewise, some 3,500 trainees received support from the Agency to follow training courses in 1992-1993.

In recent years the Agency has developed its support programmes for democratization; its participation is assured in monitoring elections, establishing consciousness-raising and training programmes in respect to human rights and supporting parliamentary and judicial institutions. These activities, particularly desired by many countries, now make the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation a leading institution.

Strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and the Agency is now seen by both sides to be a necessity. This is above all true of the United Nations, which in recent years has constantly affirmed its desire for coordination with international actors outside the system and its desire to strengthen its work of coordination. For their part, the francophone States have voiced at their highest forums, the Chaillot Summit in 1991 and the Mauritius Summit in 1993, their desire to give a more political dimension to their work and to boost their active presence on the international scene.

The francophone community has thus decided to involve itself in the family of nations and to participate in all the major debates. First and foremost, the francophone countries of the South and of the North need to establish a relationship designed to institute consultations — possibly negotiations — on the political and human problems that arise around the world.

Thus, active francophone consultations took place on the occasion of recent major international conferences: the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, in Rio de Janeiro in 1992; the World Conference on Human Rights, in Vienna in 1993; the International Conference on Population and Development, in Cairo in 1994; the World Summit for Social Development, in Copenhagen that year; and the Fourth World Conference on Women, which has just taken place in Beijing. On all these occasions, the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation helped organize and coordinate the participation of the French-speaking States.

With the same aim of strengthening the francophone presence in international cooperation, the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation opened liaison offices in Geneva in 1991 and with the European Union in Brussels in 1994. As I mentioned earlier, it has just opened an office in New York as well, thus manifesting its desire to forge closer ties with the United Nations and to play a more active and concrete role as an Observer, a status it has enjoyed since 1978.

Lastly, I wish to stress the clear complementarity of the activities of the United Nations and those of the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation in the promotion of economic, social and political development. The rich and diverse programme of activities of the Agency in the fields of culture, communication, education, technical assistance and the promotion of democracy parallel in every way the concerns of our Organization.

In this context, the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation has of course already been working with several regional and international organizations. Hence, its close relations with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

have helped to lay the basis of a joint commission of these two organizations. Similarly, joint programmes have been developed with the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Children's Fund.

We are convinced that the draft resolution now before the General Assembly will pave the way for even more fruitful cooperation between our two organizations, and we therefore call on the Assembly to adopt it.

Mr. Boisson (Monaco) (*interpretation from French*): The Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation was founded 25 years ago in Niamey to promote multilateral cooperation between countries that use French as a common language. At the beginning it had 21 States and Governments as members; it now has 44, nearly one quarter of the States Members of the United Nations, distributed throughout the five continents.

The international cooperation which the Agency engendered has lasted 25 years and the number of States and Governments which it has brought together has more than doubled in that time. This is proof that its founders, three great Heads of State — President Léopold Sédar Senghor of Senegal, President Habib Bourguiba of Tunisia and President Hamani Diori of Niger — accurately foresaw the need to affirm the ties of cooperation and solidarity between countries that history or geography had once linked, but that history and the passage of time now threatened to drive apart for ever.

With the end of colonialism and the restoration of independence to many countries, a new historical dynamic, based on the values of equality among peoples, justice and equitable economic cooperation, sought to exert itself. The magnitude and originality of the vision of these three great African wise men — confirmed by a quarter of a century of success and increasing vigour for the Agency — probably lay in their understanding that culture could be a source of mutual enrichment and fruitfulness, of rapprochement between peoples. This culture, in the larger, anthropological sense, included not only artistic expression and common languages and vernacular languages, but also the ways of life, social organization and technology that arise from the creativity, ability to adapt and intelligence that men and women have had accumulated over time across the five continents. Their vision was the founding inspiration of the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation.

Moreover, this initiative fell within a favourable context of human dimension and a framework of values and hopes that were largely shared by sovereign States and Governments linked by their use of the French language, which greatly helped the Agency first to be recognized internationally and then to grow.

Twenty-five years later, when the world and societies have profoundly changed and broad political, economic and social upheavals have shaken our era, these exceptional qualities have allowed the Agency to maintain the same desire for cooperation in a spirit of respect for cultures and dialogue between civilizations.

Because their wealth and their complementarity result from their differences, the States and Governments that are members or associates of the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation naturally strive to bring them into play in the regular exchange of their experiences. In our opinion, this complementarity and sharing lend multilateral francophone cooperation an original dimension based on respect for its participants, equality of its undertakings and balance in its political and economic relations, which perfectly reflect the principles proclaimed by the United Nations in the San Francisco Charter and in the many texts, resolutions, declarations and conventions adopted since 1945.

The observer status in the General Assembly which the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation has enjoyed since 1978 is confirmation — if confirmation is needed — that the values of the United Nations are also those of the francophone Agency. Its participation in important international meetings organized by the United Nations on significant social issues are also an expression of its mission. The Agency has participated in international debates and exchanges of view, to which it has brought its own way of thinking and the abilities of its own member States and Governments.

The Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation attended the Rio Earth Summit, United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, in 1992. It prepared carefully for this, with the encouragement of its own organs, particularly the summit of Heads of State and Government held in Dakar in May 1989, and further enriched by the work of its own experts, who carefully monitored the preparatory work for this important conference.

The Government of the Principality of Monaco, having a particular interest in the topics under discussion at the world summit, was closely associated with it and is pleased to welcome its results. The Ministerial

Conference on the Environment and Development, meeting in Tunis in April 1993, furthermore adopted a five-year programme intended to contribute to the implementation of the decisions that emerged from the Rio de Janeiro Conference, and of its Agenda 21.

The same concern and the same careful attention were devoted to the preparations for the World Conference on Human Rights organized by the United Nations in Vienna in 1993. The Agency's general delegation for legal and judicial cooperation contributed to the preparation of that important Conference, with the involvement of specialists from Monaco. The Agency is now striving to provide for follow-up activity on the part of its member States that would strengthen and complement the initiatives taken by the United Nations Centre for Human Rights.

In endeavouring to place the law at the service of development and democracy, this French-speaking institution is determined to develop a spirit in which the rule of law can be expressed on a daily basis.

Along these lines, it has for some years been increasing the number of observer missions in countries where the multiparty system is being developed at their request, thus associating itself with the activities of the United Nations in this area.

In many other fields, too, the Agency is lending its support to activities being carried out by our world Organization that relate to economic and social development. It often takes its inspiration from the major conclusions of world conferences in which it has taken an active part alongside States and Member Governments or associate bodies, such as the International Conference on Population and Development at Cairo, the World Summit on Social Development at Copenhagen and the Fourth World Conference on Women, which has just concluded in Beijing.

The Principality of Monaco is pleased to note that the Agency has established cooperation with a number of United Nations specialized agencies which, by virtue of their fields of competence, have mandates that are close or complementary in nature. This is the case with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in the area of education and training, for example.

In this respect, its initiatives are based broadly on the recommendations of the United Nations Conference organized by UNESCO in 1990 in Jomtien, Thailand, as well as on the programme of action adopted by the conference of Francophone Ministers of Education.

In a spirit of cooperation and partnership among its members, scientific and technical information is also one of the Agency's priorities. In the view of my delegation, such information can play a part in any action aimed at human development.

In the areas of energy and agricultural development, the role of the Agency is constantly growing and being strengthened, primarily to the advantage of the least-developed countries. Sustainable development and lasting growth are crucial to the programmes in this field. We particularly appreciate and approve of this approach.

As for cultural exchanges, the Agency plays an exemplary role. I would just mention by way of example the Market of African Performing Arts (MASA), which regularly brings together in Côte d'Ivoire the best artists of four continents in an encounter that is increasingly successful every year.

The World Amateur Theatre Festival, organized every four years in Monaco, benefits from the assistance of the Agency, which has always made a remarkably high-quality contribution to the selection of African theatre troupes invited to attend.

Inter-personal communication is also one of the Agency's major concerns. The challenges that multilateral cooperation faces as a result of technical advances and changes in the media, telecommunications and computerization, have been very seriously taken into account in the French-speaking world. The mastery of modern communication tools in the service of the Francophone community has always been encouraged by my Government, which welcomes the recent achievements in this field.

The support fund for the audiovisual productions of the countries of the South, the exchange of radio and television staff, the development of TV5 in Africa and local radio are among the methods being developed to meet these challenges, and which we are always happy to encourage.

The promotion of live arts, theatre, dance, music and public readings through the medium of reading and cultural animation centres in rural areas, as well as assistance in publishing and the granting of literary prizes, are also activities devoted to this same end. The

Agency is doing very original and innovative work in this area, which we are happy to highlight, and which we feel should be encouraged by this Organization.

Finally the Agency, in one of its more important responsibilities, has since the summit of Heads of State and Government in Chaillot in 1991 provided the secretariat for all the bodies of the French-speaking movement. That includes the summits themselves with their preparation and follow-up, the annual ministerial conference, the general conference and the governing body of the Agency itself, as well as the standing council on Francophonie, which plays a leading political and coordinating role in these matters.

The Agency is performing its new functions skilfully and meticulously, thus strengthening its role as a major institution for the execution of the decisions of the political bodies of the French-speaking movement.

For all these reasons, and for many others that we will refrain from mentioning here because of time constraints, Monaco, which was represented at Niamey in 1970 when the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation was founded, welcomes and appreciates the opportunity thus granted to it today to encourage cooperation, which I would describe as natural, between the Agency and the United Nations.

The debate which the General Assembly is devoting to this question and to the draft resolution which, I very much hope, we will be able to adopt, and of which Monaco is a sponsor, gives me grounds to hope that more and more joint initiatives may be taken in the future in the areas of competence common to the Agency and the United Nations.

The opening in New York of a permanent office for the observer mission of the Agency to the United Nations symbolizes this desire to strengthen cooperation between the two multilateral institutions, while at the same time offering encouragement for the future, in that closer geographical proximity should facilitate such cooperation.

Mr. Dorani (Djibouti) (*interpretation from French*): I should like first to welcome the important initiative taken by 44 States and Governments in the francophone world, stretching from America to Asia by way of Europe and Africa, of submitting to the General Assembly a draft resolution entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation". The delegation of Djibouti endorses what the delegation of France said on behalf of our Group. In that statement the Ambassador of France was kind enough to explain the background to the draft resolution.

Keeping a sense of proportion and intending to offend nobody, may I say that the Agency is a United Nations in miniature, since a quarter of the countries present here are represented in it. Apart from the United Nations, it is the only organization where all races, colours, religions and cultures of the world are represented; in other words, every characteristic of the world's peoples is represented. Its mandate is to affirm and develop among its members, and beyond, multilateral cooperation on matters ranging from education to economic development, as well as ensuring a State of law.

However, the Agency is not confined to these areas, however important they may be. It has already begun to develop a political dimension, using its own methods, by contributing to the maintenance of international peace and security. In addition, conflict prevention is essential, and the French-speaking community — by which I mean the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation — has already committed itself to this kind of role, and will do so increasingly in the future.

Let me mention the tragedy of Rwanda as just one example. It was a very serious blow to the heart of the francophone community. Happily, a great country in our large family — great above all because of its values — had the wisdom to take positive action, saving hundreds of thousands of lives. As a member of the Security Council at the time, Djibouti welcomed that initiative and the noble task that was undertaken. The African continent as a whole will always be grateful to all the countries that have taken humanitarian measures to help.

The francophone movement is now trying to define the contribution that it should and can make to conflict prevention. Our movement will not develop parallel conflict-prevention measures, and it will not in any way set itself up as a rival to any international or regional organizations. On the contrary, we shall support their efforts.

Finally, Djibouti believes that the General Assembly's adoption of this draft resolution will demonstrate that the international community respects the ideals of the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation. My country is keen to see such recognition of the Agency.

Mr. Reyn (Belgium) (*interpretation from French*): Belgium is one of the sponsors of the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation. In introducing the draft resolution, the Ambassador of France, as Chairman of the francophone Group, highlighted the Agency's important contribution to our work here, and the Ambassadors of Monaco and Djibouti have added to the information that he gave.

Belgium welcomes the fact that the Agency now has an office at the United Nations. We believe that reinforcing this presence is the beginning of a new partnership, strengthening the Agency's participation as an observer, a status that it has had for more than 17 years.

The draft resolution is an effort to strengthen cooperation that is not new, having already been demonstrated. I am thinking especially about the Agency's active participation in recent major conferences — participation that my delegation in particular welcomed. This cooperation can only strengthen, through a new partnership, the dialogue and communication that our organization aims to promote between countries which, through a common language, have cultural elements in common.

The francophone community is a reality which can only benefit us, given the wealth and diversity of its member States, as we seek solutions to the challenges facing us in today's world. The desire to help solve political problems is expressed here. Belgium is glad that this partnership between the Agency and the United Nations, can be a catalyst to give substance to that desire. We trust that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Adechi (Benin) (*interpretation from French*): Benin was very honoured to join the delegations of many other francophone countries in taking the initiative of submitting to the General Assembly this draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation. The delegation of Benin endorses the statement made by the representative of France in his eloquent introduction of the draft resolution.

Like those representatives who have already spoken, I pay tribute to the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation and testify to its tireless action in the cause of development and peace. Indeed, the Agency, which is the sole intergovernmental organization of the francophone world, has been able, on the basis of a common language, to establish a dynamic solidarity between countries of Africa, America, Asia and Europe.

Reflecting many different cultures, the Agency is increasingly recognized as an important meeting point for the strengthening of cooperation and solidarity between peoples. Here I pay it a well-deserved tribute for its valuable participation in all the major conferences organized by the United Nations since 1990, as well as for its initiatives to facilitate the participation of representatives, Governments and non-governmental organizations of member States of the Agency.

The Agency's sphere of operation, which includes such varied fields as education, communications, energy, environment and agriculture, among others, is well in keeping with the spirit of the relevant provisions of the Charter envisaging resort to international institutions to foster economic and social progress for all peoples. It was precisely for the purpose of underscoring this complementary relationship between the Agency's activities and those of the United Nations that the Agency has enjoyed observer status since 1978.

Cooperation between the Agency and the United Nations, then, is nothing new. None the less, the new challenges facing the community of nations today call for the establishment of broader consensuses, a concerted effort and increased coordination of development policies in a spirit of fair competition and with respect for diversity.

The strengthening of cooperation between the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation and the United Nations can only be a positive contribution. For this reason, I strongly recommend this draft resolution to the Assembly and am sure that it will choose to adopt it by consensus.

Mr. Diabate (Côte d'Ivoire) (*interpretation from French*): Côte d'Ivoire is a sponsor of the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation (ACTC). Allow me, on behalf of my delegation, to join earlier speakers in stressing the importance of this subject, as well as the keen interest my country takes in it.

It is fitting to recall that since its creation in 1970, the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation, which at that time had 21 members and now has 44, has pursued objectives similar to those set by the United Nations. The Agency's most important areas of activity

cover education and training, culture, communications, agriculture, energy, environment, promotion and protection of human rights and support for the democratization process.

The concurrence between the purposes of the United Nations and those of the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation is perfectly illustrated by the repeated mention of these topics by a number of speakers in the general debate of the last three weeks and the fact that they have been studied extensively. This concurrence also indicates the need for strengthened and increased cooperation between the two organizations in order to bring their common ideals to fruition.

Furthermore, in recent years, within the ACTC a number of activities have been developed that are worth mentioning because of the genuine benefits derived from them by the francophone countries involved. I am referring in particular to assistance and logistical support provided by the ACTC to the francophone countries of the South for their participation in world summits organized under the auspices of the United Nations, such as the World Summit for Children, held in New York in 1990, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio in 1992, the World Conference on Human Rights, held in Vienna in 1993, the International Conference on Population and Development, held in Cairo in 1994, the World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen in 1994, and the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995. At such summits and conferences, the ACTC organizes consultative meetings for francophone countries, makes necessary arrangements for certain governmental delegations and non-governmental organizations and publishes a daily information bulletin in French. Furthermore, the ACTC provides francophone delegations with a logistical-support secretariat. Thus, the significant role played by the ACTC at the Beijing summit continues to have an impact, not simply because it was so recent, but, rather, because of the magnitude of its role and the extent to which it was appreciated by those whom it served.

All these ACTC initiatives, the scope of which we are now taking the measure, are intended to facilitate the participation of some States in these summits. They are francophone States, to be sure, but they are also Members of this great family of the United Nations, and they are States that without such logistical support would find it difficult to participate effectively in such important world summits. There can be no question that such initiatives are in keeping with another ideal shared by the United Nations and the ACTC: solidarity between Member States, between nations and between peoples.

In conclusion, in order to enable the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation to continue and further strengthen its cooperation with the United Nations, the delegation of Côte d'Ivoire recommends that the General Assembly unanimously adopt the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation.

Mr. Abdellah (Tunisia) (*interpretation from French*): The consideration of the agenda item on cooperation between the United Nations and the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation (ACTC) gives me the opportunity to expound Tunisia's viewpoint on the potential role of regional and supraregional organizations, such as the ACTC, in bringing peoples together and in contributing to the renewal of multilateralism.

With specific regard to the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation (ACTC), I am pleased to recall that this intergovernmental organization, based on common ideals of dialogue, solidarity and cooperation, is composed of 44 States and Governments whose peoples share the French language as a cultural vehicle, a carrier of civilization and a tool for access and technical advancement. Those are the hopes of the founding States, including Tunisia, for achievement of the objectives of the Agency, which was established in 1970 as a catalyst for development and mutual enrichment.

Over the past 25 years, the Agency, despite its youth, has carried out a wide variety of supraregional activities, transcending ideological rifts at a time when the cold war was raging. That is why, despite all the obstacles, the Agency has been so successful, with the number of its member States and Governments rising from 21 at the beginning to 44 today. Over the same period, the Agency has responded to changes both internationally and within its member States by diversifying its activities and increasing the number of its operations and initiatives, thus meeting the hopes it has aroused since its creation and revitalizing its patterns of cooperation on a dynamic and reinvigorated basis.

Here I wish to touch on the main focuses of the Agency's work. Apart from education, training, culture and communication, the ACTC has created specialized training programmes in the areas of agriculture, food production, environment and energy. In the latter sector in particular, this intergovernmental organization has

helped set up a support programme for energy capability and transfer of technology in the area of new and renewable sources of energy.

Another area in which the Agency has played a leading role is that of the environment; here the ACTC has contributed to national environmental plans of action, to natural-resources management, and to the management of national parks and preserves.

The expansion and intensification of the Agency's activities have been designed to reflect its leadership's concern for efficiency and effectiveness, and aim to formalize cooperation with other regional and international organizations. Through that approach, the Agency has tried to avoid dissipation of its efforts, to benefit from complementarity among organizations dealing with similar or related issues, and thus to create the synergy needed for the success of development programmes for the South, and for the prospects for partnership among the States members of the Agency.

In that spirit, the ACTC has signed framework agreements with the Organization of African Unity, covering such areas as the legal sphere and human rights. The ACTC has joined with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization in creating a support programme for small agro-industrial enterprises in least-developed countries. Moreover, the Agency has begun promising cooperation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and with the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Those programmes involve the production of literacy material and the cofinancing of training operations. And along with the World Bank, the Agency has contributed to the financing of programmes in the areas of energy and the environment.

Drawing on that experience, the Agency wishes now to expand its cooperation to justify the hopes placed upon it, by making its relationship with the United Nations an official one. As a founding member of the ACTC and as an active participant among countries that share the French language, Tunisia supports the formalization of cooperation between the Agency and the United Nations. The cooperation we wish to see between the two organizations is in keeping with the reforms the United Nations is undertaking towards involving regional institutions more closely in its activities. The involvement of such institutions in development endeavours increases their responsibilities and could also reduce the heavy administrative and financial burden borne by the United Nations.

The ACTC, whose States members come from all five continents, with their consequent wealth of culture and civilization, and whose peoples belong to both the North and the South, will certainly be able to make an active contribution to the renewal of international cooperation.

Mr. Ould Ely (Mauritania) (*interpretation from French*): As this is my first statement before the General Assembly at this fiftieth session, let me begin, Sir, by saying how pleased my delegation is to see you presiding over our work. We know your experience and personal qualities, and are certain that under your leadership our work will yield positive results.

Formalization of the cooperation between the United Nations and the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation (ACTC), which will be approved this morning, could not be taking place at a more historic or a more auspicious moment. The celebration in a few days' time of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations will mark the Organization's coming of age, and will also be an opportunity to lay the foundations for forms of international cooperation free from the ideological confrontation of the past, and directed firmly towards global challenges. These challenges include economic and social development, strengthening democracy and respect for human rights, promoting sustainable development while bearing in mind the need to protect the environment, fighting the scourge of drug abuse, and promoting equality for men and women.

It is fortunate that in all these areas the work of the United Nations has been supported by the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation, which has the same objectives and defends the same ideals of peace and cooperation and understanding among peoples. Established on 20 March 1970 as a joint project of the countries that use French as a common language, to establish the expression of a new solidarity and an additional factor for rapprochment between peoples by a permanent dialogue of different cultures, the Agency has always carried out its activities with due respect for the identities of each of its members, while participating constructively in the world dialogue. From Rio to Beijing, it has participated actively in the deliberations which led to the adoption of various programmes of action, and it encouraged participation by its members.

The Heads of State of the countries that use French as a common language, gathered together in the francophone community, decided at their recent Summit

in Mauritius to establish a new partnership with all the institutions that are members of the United Nations family, thereby emphasizing the complementarity between the United Nations and the francophone movement. In so doing, they gave concrete expression to Chapters VIII and IX of the United Nations Charter, which encourages close cooperation between regional bodies and the United Nations in order to create the conditions of stability and prosperity needed to ensure peaceful and friendly relations between countries and thus maintain peace and security.

In this regard, the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation plays a positive leading role within the francophone community by guiding multilateral cooperation between its members in areas of interest to the United Nations, such as the place of law in the service of development and democracy, education and training, and technical cooperation in vital sectors, such as energy, scientific information and the environment.

The Islamic Republic of Mauritania, which has always based its policy on dialogue and friendly agreement, can only be proud to be involved in an initiative which encourages understanding between nations and peoples. Both an Arab and an African country that has inherited many different cultures, Mauritania feels at home in an organization which, respecting cultural diversity, advocates fruitful dialogue, to the benefit of all its members, for the preservation of peace and stability. This is why we are happy to sponsor the draft resolution, and trust that it will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Osseyi (Togo): My delegation is speaking on this agenda item in order to draw attention to the interest that the Government of Togo takes in the activities of the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation and the importance we attach to it as the one intergovernmental organization of the francophone world. I would also like to highlight the capacity of the Agency, because of the nature of its activities, to contribute to resolving the political and economic problems of the world today through a structural partnership with all the agencies that are members of the United Nations family.

On 27 October 1994, in Bucharest, the Secretary-General told the Romanian Parliament:

> "The United Nations should ... be able to provide Member States with technical assistance to help them adapt their institutions, assist their citizens and train their personnel. It is vitally important to create independent judiciaries, establish armies that respect the rule of law, train police to be the guarantors of people's freedom, and to set up systems designed to educate the population in the field of human rights."

To carry out this mission of peace throughout the world, and particularly in the developing countries, it is clear that the United Nations system, however willing, cannot alone measure up to what is at stake and meet the challenges the Organization faces. The United Nations alone cannot cope with the problems of all States, or groups of States, and do the detailed elaboration of programmes to promote the desired development. It is essential to have the involvement of other structures, which I would describe as taking up the baton from the United Nations.

The Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation's mandate is to maintain and develop multilateral cooperation between its members in areas such as education and training, culture and communications, energy, the environment, agriculture, economic development, economic information and the promotion of the rule of law, and we believe wholeheartedly that it is one of the agencies that can lend support to the United Nations.

For example, since the United Nations began its series of conferences focusing on the essential aspects of change and development at the global level, the Agency has stood steadfastly at its side to help define the goals to be sought. Beforehand, it prepared for the conferences by, *inter alia*, organizing meetings of the francophone countries, either at the fringes of the preparatory committee meetings or on an ad hoc basis to harmonize positions, ensuring the participation in large numbers of francophone government representatives and representatives of non-governmental organizations in the conferences and non-governmental organizations' forums. Afterwards, the Agency contributed to the implementation in the francophone world of the programmes of action adopted by the conferences. For example, in the follow-up to the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights, to give just one example, the Agency was involved in providing education and training in human rights for magistrates, others involved in the administration of justice, educators and journalists. At the same time, it was active in preparing, editing and distributing teaching materials on human rights, while supporting the processes of democratization and improving conditions for the administration of justice.

For all these reasons, the Government of Togo, which greatly appreciates the Agency's support for development efforts in Togo, joined other Governments in calling for the inclusion on the agenda of the item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation" and co-sponsored the draft resolution.

We did so because we are convinced that the United Nations and the Agency share the same ideals and pursue the same objectives of peace through human development, and that strengthening their cooperation by having close and regular relations can only speed up the attainment of these objectives.

My delegation trusts that draft resolution A/50/L.4 will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Moubarak (Lebanon) (*interpretation from French*): My delegation is pleased to be one of the sponsors of the draft resolution on the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation. Lebanon is one of the 37 member States of the Agency, the intergovernmental organization of the francophone movement, which is, above all, a meeting point formed around an ideal. This year it celebrates its twenty-fifth anniversary, at a time when it is experiencing renewed vigour.

The multilateral cooperation that the Agency seeks to develop among its members is broad-ranging, affecting education, training, culture, communications, energy, the environment and much more. We believe that support for educational systems, the promotion of literacy, preservation of our heritage, the development of the creative potential of audiovisual products, support for national plans of action on the environment, the management of national parks and other protected areas and inter-parliamentary cooperation are all matters that should be steadily developed and that have an increasingly tangible and specific impact now that the Agency is seeking to cooperate more fully and more systematically with the United Nations system. As the Agency is increasingly involved in the United Nations system, its impact will be enhanced.

There is no question but that the francophone movement plays an important role in the community of nations, both on the political level and on the cultural level. And, since 1990, we have seen the Agency playing a growing role in world conferences and summits organized by the United Nations. It is therefore natural for the Agency's activities to be coordinated with those of the United Nations system and for there to be increased cooperation between the Agency, the United Nations and the specialized agencies.

Lebanon is one of the Agency's oldest and most active members. It considers that the Agency performs a function which is fully in accord with the spirit and the letter of international life. Our delegation is therefore anxious to see the unanimous adoption of the draft resolution.

We should now be able to look forward to the Agency's playing an increasing role in harmony with international programmes. Much is at stake. This means a fresh start, rejuvenation. This interaction should succeed in harmonizing our complementarity and our differences to the benefit of the members of the Agency and of the international community. This is why we are eager to see this objective achieved. We would convey once again to the Permanent Observer of the Agency our best wishes and assure him of the full support of our delegation.

The President (*interpretation from French*): In accordance with resolution 33/18 of 10 November 1978, I now call on the Observer for the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation.

Mr. Bouabid (Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation) (*interpretation from French*): This is the first time that, as Permanent Observer of the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation, I have spoken here in the General Assembly. I am particularly pleased to do so at an anniversary session of the General Assembly on an item concerning cooperation between the United Nations and the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation. I am also particularly pleased to be doing so under your presidency, Sir. I extend to you my warmest congratulations on your election to the presidency of this particularly important session of the General Assembly. Your personal qualities, your extensive knowledge of international relations and your considerable political experience give us all good reason to expect a successful outcome to the work at this session under your guidance.

I would also like to pay tribute to your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Côte d'Ivoire, and a distinguished member of the Ministerial Conference of the francophone movement. The manner in which he presided over the last session was appreciated by everyone.

Lastly, in this most memorable year in the life of the United Nations, I would like to extend to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, on behalf of the Secretary-General of the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation, Mr. Jean-Louis Roy, and on my own personal behalf, a message of congratulations, support and commitment to him for his constant and tireless efforts at the head of this Organization to promote the goals of world peace, security and development. These are the same goals of peace and development sought by the francophone community, grouped together within our organization, the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation. They are the very foundation of the francophone ideal, as laid out by the founders of the intergovernmental francophone movement in Niamey in 1970, when they established the Agency.

Since then, over 25 years, this idea has brought progress extending to five continents. It brings together a community of more than 400 million persons, in Europe, Africa, America and Asia, with one common goal: to provide a space for dialogue, cooperation and partnership with total respect for diversity. Its unity is based on a community of values and of language, devoted to the promotion of peace, justice, security, solidarity and democracy and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, which are universal and inalienable.

These are the principles of the francophone movement, as strongly reconfirmed in the statement issued at the Summit of Heads of State and Government of countries that use French as a common language, held in Mauritius in October 1993. It was at that same Summit that our Heads of State and Government, after studying the international political and economic situation and recognizing the importance of multilateralism in the new international context, restated their desire to contribute actively to the solution of the major political and economic problems of today's world and to begin a new partnership with all the organizations that make up the United Nations family. At the same time, they paid tribute to the historic role played by the United Nations and reiterated their full support for its Secretary-General, particularly in the implementation of the Agenda for Peace and the Agenda for Development.

They also defined a strategy for multilateral cooperation in the areas of development mentioned by many earlier speakers: education and training, culture and communications, energy, the environment, agriculture, the economy, scientific information and the strengthening of the State of law. They called on the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation to pursue and intensify its cooperation with international organizations, particularly the United Nations, in the implementation of the programmes mapped out for those fields. The francophone movement also recalled that a common language can be a dynamic vehicle for exchange and cooperation and a catalyst for enriching world dialogue.

Among the duties assigned to the Agency by its statutes is the responsibility of maintaining ties with international organizations involved in the same areas of activity and of ensuring the greatest possible level of consistency and viability in initiatives that are undertaken. In that context, the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation has been represented at the European Union since 1994. Very recently, a permanent observer office of the Agency was also opened at the United Nations. This office, which I have the honour to direct, is also responsible for ensuring liaison with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. These two new arrangements strengthen our organization's plans to ensure permanent ties with international organizations, the first phase of which was the establishment in Geneva in 1991 of representation at the United Nations and its specialized agencies in that city.

These recent actions are simply an extension of the Agency's regular activities *vis-à-vis* the international organizations. These activities have two goals. The first is to offer our member countries responses that are more relevant to their development needs through external technical and financial resources made available to them jointly by the Agency and these organizations. The second is to ensure, in close cooperation with the authorities of the countries concerned, the coordination of activities undertaken in a particular field by the Agency and other organizations. This would rationalize the measures they take and avoid duplication and concentrate existing resources on specific targets.

In a world where the problems of development are what they are, particularly in the countries of the South, and where resources to address them are limited, logic and realism require synergy, rationalization, collaboration and solidarity.

Specific measures of cooperation undertaken in this spirit have been taken by the Agency with a number of other international organizations, including the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the Organization of African Unity, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the

Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the European Commission, the Indian Ocean Commission, the African Development Bank and the World Bank. On the same model, we wish to develop our ties to the United Nations.

The observer status which our Agency has enjoyed at this Organization and the ever-increasing participation of the francophone movement in world conferences organized by the United Nations have, I believe, been at the heart of the promising relationship between our two organizations, particularly in recent years. I should like to cite certain experiences that highlight the complementarity of the activities of the two organizations and, in some cases, the synergy that has arisen.

At the Rio Summit on environment and development, the countries using French as a common language participated as a group on the basis of a consensus reached at their conference of environment ministers organized by the Agency in Tunis from 19 to 23 April 1991.

During the preparations for the Summit, in order to facilitate negotiations at the international level on two of the most important items on the agenda, the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation carried out two studies on financial resources and mechanisms and on transfers of technology for environment and sustainable development. These two studies were submitted to the fourth session of the Preparatory Committee of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development as the francophone contribution to the work of the Rio Summit.

As for the follow-up to that Summit, the Agency made available to its member States — and in particular the countries of the South — small groups of governmental experts to strengthen their participation in the work on the Conventions on climate change, biodiversity and the struggle against decertification and drought.

The second example I wish to cite concerns the preparations for, proceedings of and follow-up to the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights. As part of the preparations for the Conference, the Agency organized, in Libreville in May 1993, a meeting of experts of its member States, which produced an agreed francophone document that was submitted to Vienna as the francophone community's contribution to the search for a world consensus on the Conference's final document.

In a statement he made in Brussels on 24 March 1994, Francophone Day, the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Ibrahima Fall, said:

> "Through their active participation in the work of the Preparatory Committee of the Conference in April 1993 in Geneva; through a special meeting of French-speaking human rights experts in Libreville in May 1993; and through the coordination of collective participation by the francophone community during the Conference itself, with the assistance of the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation, the representatives of the francophone States made a significant contribution to the political and diplomatic success of Vienna and to the quality of the final document adopted by the Conference."

As follow-up to the Conference, joint meetings with the United Nations Centre for Human Rights allowed us to identify areas for cooperation between the Agency, through its general delegation for juridical and judiciary cooperation, and the United Nations for the implementation in the francophone world of the plan of action adopted at the international level. Among relevant areas, I would mention the joint organization of training seminars for the preparation of national reports to be submitted by countries pursuant to international human rights conventions to which they are party; human rights training and education for magistrates, justice system administrators, educators and journalists; the establishment of regional centres for human rights training; and the conception, publication and distribution of teaching aids for human rights.

I could also speak about the preparations for and proceedings of the recent World Conference in Beijing, where the francophone community had a stronger presence than at any other world conference. This was mentioned by the representative of Côte d'Ivoire. Three follow-up activities are already planned jointly with the United Nations, including a seminar to be held in Bangui, Central African Republic, in a few weeks — in November — on the drafting of national reports pursuant to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. But I prefer to emphasize other types of cooperation that have been undertaken with the United Nations in the framework of our programme entitled "Law in the service of development and democracy", which should be one of the major axes of future cooperation between the two organizations.

In the area of election monitoring, the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation, acting pursuant to a decision by the standing committee of the French-speaking movement, has since 1993 sent about 25 election observation missions to countries members of the French-speaking movement that had so requested. With only a few exceptions, those missions are always preceded by an exploratory mission to analyse the socio-political context and environment of the election, as well as any measures or arrangements, whether structural or technical and legal, that might be taken or which are already under way to prepare and organize the election, and then to collect all the texts and documents relating to it.

This is a very important area, where our two Organizations should strengthen their cooperation further and act in close collaboration, both during the preparatory phase leading up to the election and during the actual holding of the election, in accordance with the model of the legislative elections in Benin in March 1995, where true coordination was achieved.

In Rwanda, in response to a request by the Rwandese authorities to a number of international organizations, including the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation calling for action to support the establishment of a state of law and to aid national reconciliation, a joint mission of the Agency, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Centre for Human Rights was organized from 16 to 22 November 1994 on the basis of agreed terms of reference. The report of that mission served as the basis for the plan of action proposed to the round table of creditors of Rwanda organized at Geneva on 18 and 19 January 1995.

The French-speaking movement, in coordination with UNDP and the Centre for Human Rights, provided support for the arrangements by sending magistrates and human rights observers, as well as by supporting the work of the Special Rapporteur, in implementation of the plan of action.

These are just a few examples of the kind of pooling of resources that can result in benefits for Member States and promote the effectiveness of activities undertaken by the various actors in multilateral cooperation. It is our hope that these examples will be strengthened, multiplied and broadened to all the activities and areas of common interest between the United Nations and our Agency. This was the desire of our Heads of State and Government, as has been confirmed by the many delegations that have asked to speak on this agenda item at the current session, and which have also become sponsors of the relevant draft resolution.

I should like to extend to those delegations, as well as to all the member States of the French-speaking group, the appreciation and thanks of the Secretary-General of the Agency and on my own behalf for the statements they have made this morning in favour of the actions and operations of the Agency, and for the active support they have thus shown for strengthening the cooperation between the United Nations and the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation, thus injecting fresh vigour into multilateral francophone and international cooperation. It is our hope that the Secretary-General, in the report he is to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session in accordance with the draft resolution now under consideration, will be able to note significant progress in this area.

The President (*interpretation from French*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/50/L.4.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/50/L.4?

Draft resolution A/50/L.4 was adopted (resolution 50/3).

The President (*interpretation from French*): May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 157?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.